

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

104th Congress
2nd Session

Vote No. 121

May 22, 1996, 9:51 a.m.
Page S-5465 Temp. Record

BUDGET RESOLUTION/College Tax Deduction

SUBJECT: Senate Concurrent Budget Resolution for fiscal years 1997-2002 . . . S. Con. Res. 57. Domenici motion to table the Wellstone amendment No. 3985.

ACTION: MOTION TO TABLE AGREED TO, 56-44

SYNOPSIS: As reported, S. Con. Res. 57, the Concurrent Budget Resolution for fiscal years 1997-2002, will balance the Federal budget in fiscal year (FY) 2002 by slowing the overall rate of growth in spending over the next 6 years to below the rate of growth in revenue collections. The rate of growth in entitlements such as Medicare, Medicaid, the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program, and the Earned Income Credit will be slowed. No changes will be made to the Social Security program, the spending for which will grow from \$348 billion in FY 1996 to \$467 billion in FY 2002. Defense spending will be essentially frozen at its present level.

The Wellstone amendment would express the sense of the Senate that any "revenue raised by the Finance Committee" to provide tax relief that is in excess of the amount needed to pay for the \$500 per-child tax credit that this resolution assumes will be provided will be used to finance a tax deduction of \$10,000 per year for higher education costs or to reduce the Federal budget deficit. Further, it will express the sense of the Senate that any such additional revenue will not be used to provide tax cuts that disproportionately benefit the wealthy and large corporations. (The underlying resolution does not call for tax hikes to pay for the \$500 per child tax credit, as implied by this amendment; it calls for spending cuts, with the savings to be used to provide this tax relief instead of spent. The resolution does, however, note that corporate and business tax reforms may be enacted that will increase tax collections as long as the savings are given back to the American people in the form of additional tax relief.)

Following debate, Senator Domenici moved to table the Wellstone amendment. Generally, those favoring the motion to table opposed the amendment; those opposing the motion to table favored the amendment.

Those favoring the motion to table contended:

(See other side)

YEAS (56)			NAYS (44)		NOT VOTING (0)	
Republicans (53 or 100%)	Democrats (3 or 6%)		Republicans (0 or 0%)	Democrats (44 or 94%)	Republicans (0)	Democrats (0)
Abraham	Helms	Hollings		Akaka	Inouye	
Ashcroft	Hutchison	Kohl		Baucus	Johnston	
Bennett	Inhofe	Moynihan		Biden	Kennedy	
Bond	Jeffords			Bingaman	Kerrey	
Brown	Kassebaum			Boxer	Kerry	
Burns	Kempthorne			Bradley	Lautenberg	
Campbell	Kyl			Breaux	Leahy	
Chafee	Lott			Bryan	Levin	
Coats	Lugar			Bumpers	Lieberman	
Cochran	Mack			Byrd	Mikulski	
Cohen	McCain			Conrad	Moseley-Braun	
Coverdell	McConnell			Daschle	Murray	
Craig	Murkowski			Dodd	Nunn	
D'Amato	Nickles			Dorgan	Pell	
DeWine	Pressler			Exon	Pryor	
Dole	Roth			Feingold	Reid	
Domenici	Santorum			Feinstein	Robb	
Faircloth	Shelby			Ford	Rockefeller	
Frist	Simpson			Glenn	Sarbanes	
Gorton	Smith			Graham	Simon	
Gramm	Snowe			Harkin	Wellstone	
Grams	Specter			Heflin	Wyden	
Grassley	Stevens					
Gregg	Thomas					
Hatch	Thompson					
Hatfield	Thurmond					
	Warner					

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

1—Official Business
2—Necessarily Absent
3—Illness
4—Other

SYMBOLS:

AY—Announced Yea
AN—Announced Nay
PY—Paired Yea
PN—Paired Nay

We commend our colleagues for their proposal. Ordinarily proposals by Democrats suggest tax increases so that they can increase Federal spending. This time, they have actually suggested that if we increase the tax burden on businesses and corporations by eliminating existing deductions, or "loopholes," we should give the money back to the American people in the form of tax relief instead of spending it. Not only that, they have suggested that we give it back to them in the form of a tax deduction, or "loophole," for higher education that we support. This amendment undoubtedly has merit. Nevertheless, we must oppose it. Other proposed tax deductions also have merit, and we are not willing at this point to say that this education deduction alone should be given consideration. For instance, we think a homemakers Investment Retirement Account deserves consideration, in order to give appropriate recognition to the value of the work that is done by full-time homemakers. That proposal we know has wide bipartisan support, but this amendment would put the Senate on record as believing that it is of secondary concern, at best. Therefore, though the Wellstone amendment is meritorious, it is wrong to suggest that its proposed tax deduction is better than all other proposed tax deductions, so we must vote to table it.

Those opposing the motion to table contended:

The resolution before us will allow additional tax cuts to be made beyond the \$500 per child tax credit. If we do not pass the Wellstone amendment, those cuts will end up disproportionately helping the wealthy. Instead of passing such tax cuts as a reduction in the capital gains tax, we should make sure that any additional tax cuts that we pass will help average working American families. We can think of no better way to help those families than to make college more affordable. The costs of higher education are going through the roof. The percentage of income that it takes from a family to send a child through college has roughly doubled since 1980 and is still climbing. At the same time, the assistance that is available has greatly declined. In 1974, roughly 80 percent of an average student aid package was comprised of grants, and 20 percent was comprised of loans. Today those statistics have been reversed. As a result, many families can no longer hope to send their children to college. The Wellstone amendment would give these families some hope. Any revenue gained from closing corporate and business tax loopholes would have to be used to provide a \$10,000 per year tax deduction for college expenses. In the long run, we are certain that the credit would more than pay for itself by creating a more educated, more productive workforce. We urge our colleagues to oppose the motion to table this meritorious amendment.